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# Allston-Brighton

District Profile &  
Proposed 1978-1980  
Neighborhood  
Improvement  
Program

City of Boston  
Kevin H. White, Mayor  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Neighborhood Planning Program  
Summer, 1977

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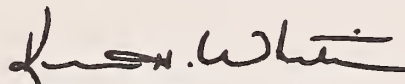
ALLSTON/BRIGHTON



The Boston Redevelopment Authority's Neighborhood Planning Program has prepared this report to assist residents and City agencies develop longer range solutions to community-wide planning issues.

This "Neighborhood Profile" contains information which helps bring into sharp focus those matters which are of concern to residents of each neighborhood in the City. This information facilitates public understanding and assists all of us--both at City Hall and in the neighborhood--in determining how we can best use the resources available to us.

I hope this booklet serves as an important building block to encourage greater interest in the problems confronting this neighborhood and our City and help us all in developing solutions to these problems.



Kevin H. White  
Mayor

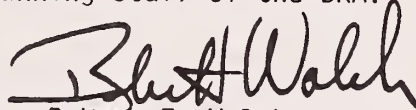


The Boston Redevelopment Authority, as the City planning agency, is pleased to submit for neighborhood review a profile of Allston-Brighton.

It is my hope that the profile can serve as a starting point in the dialogue that should and must take place between neighborhood residents and public officials as decisions are made about the use of community development funds and other matters of public policy.

The decision-making process, of course, must be based on data that is up-to-date and accurate. I am confident that the material contained in this report can be of great assistance to all who care about this neighborhood in particular and the city as a whole.

Questions and comments about the material in the report should be directed to the Neighborhood Planning staff of the BRA.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert F. Walsh". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "R" and "W".

Robert F. Walsh  
Director  
Boston Redevelopment Authority



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This planning report, prepared by the Allston-Brighton Neighborhood Planner, is intended to assist local residents and City officials in defining the needs of, and programs for Allston-Brighton. It is also written to assist prospective residents and businessmen who may wish further information about the community.

The report includes background information, a discussion of major community planning and development issues and recommended strategies intended to aid in the establishment of a long range framework for decision making by the public and private sectors.







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# 1. BACKGROUND

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## A. NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

Settlement in Allston-Brighton began in 1635 when the area was opened to land grant settlers. Agriculture was the economic mainstay and the Brighton stockyards became the foremost cattle market in the region. A pattern of sparsely settled agricultural land prevailed until the filling of Back Bay and Kenmore Square in the late 1800's. At that time, the extension of street car lines encouraged high quality residential development in the district. The southern and western portions of Allston-Brighton have retained their predominantly residential character to this day.

However, in the northern and eastern sections, the proximity to the Charles River and to the Boston and Albany Railroad encouraged the construction of the stockyards, slaughterhouses and meatpacking operations. As the nation expanded westward and refrigerated railroad cars were introduced, the Brighton stockyards declined in importance. The yards and ancillary facilities were replaced by other industrial plants, commercial warehouses, and in some cases, houses. Settlement was unplanned and as a consequence housing, commercial and industrial uses were intermingled causing a confusing and blighted environment that still exists in some sections today.

The post-World War II era has brought two dramatic changes to the predominantly family-residential district of Allston-Brighton. First the Massachusetts Turnpike extension was constructed and in effect isolated the Allston community from Brighton. The Turnpike had a more significant negative impact on the community than the Penn Central railroad tracks which had divided the area previously, since the width of the right-of-way, the noise and air pollution were greater than the railroad's and there is no longer the pedestrian underpass which facilitated movement between Allston and Brighton. Secondly the growth of local universities resulted in a considerable influx of students and young working people seeking housing in the district. Although this movement has tapered off since 1970, the effects of population shifts are still being felt.

## B. EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

Allston-Brighton unlike some other neighborhoods in the City is heterogenous in its racial, ethnic and economic composition. The variety of housing choices, both for owners and tenants, the availability of public transportation, the presence of green areas and tree shaded streets, the location of universities and hospital complexes all serve to draw individuals with various incomes to Allston-Brighton. The working population includes a significant proportion of professional, managerial and technical workers (32%)

especially when compared to laborers and domestics (3%). Another substantial proportion (29%) is in clerical work. At the same time, however, rents in Allston-Brighton are the second highest in the city exceeded only by those in Back Bay-Beacon Hill. However, the area has housing for a wide variety of income groups.

Information of population and housing in this report is derived from the 1970 U.S. Census. The data for the Allston-Brighton district is available on a sub-area basis and for purposes of analyzing this data, three sub-areas have been designated; Allston, Commonwealth and Brighton. Allston is that section in the northeast bounded on the north and east by the Charles River and on the south and west by Brighton Avenue and North Beacon Street. The Massachusetts Turnpike passes through this section. The Commonwealth sub-area is a narrow expanse to the south including Commonwealth Avenue from Brighton Avenue to Cleveland Circle. The Brighton sub-area extends to the Newton city limits and includes such major streets as Cambridge, Washington and Market Streets.

## 1. ALLSTON

The character of the Allston community has changed considerably because of the influx of students and young working people from nearby colleges and universities and the concurrent decrease in the number of elderly residents. Some families are leaving Allston and the single family homes are being converted to multi-unit structures. This is apparent in the 1970 census data which showed a 19% decrease in the number of housing units with 6-8 rooms and a concurrent 24% increase in the number of units with 1-3 rooms. Although there was a net growth in population of 2% in contrast to a city-wide decrease from 1960-70, Allston, as a family residential community, has been weakened by the increase of absentee landlords. At the same time rents and sales prices have risen substantially (making it difficult in some cases for long-term residents to remain). The lack of permanence in the community is evident from the fact that over 62% of the population did not live in the same residence in 1965 as in 1970, compared with 50% for the city as a whole. In spite of the fact that absentee ownership may be causing deterioration in the housing stock and a change in the neighborhood's character, owner occupants continue to invest in their property. There is, on the other hand, a significant percentage of homes (35%) requiring rehabilitation in excess of \$1,000, according to a 1973 City/BRA survey.





## 2. COMMONWEALTH

The Commonwealth sub-area consists primarily of those structures with five or more units. This sub-area contains 58% of the 5+ units structures in Allston-Brighton. The population is considerably more mobile since 70% have moved since 1965 compared with 62% in Allston and 48% in Brighton. The Commonwealth community experienced a sizable (7%) decrease in overall population from 1960-70, but the number of people aged 20-24 years increased 214% and now represents 30% of the population in the area. Since many of the students and young working people sharing apartments have automobiles, there has been an increase in cars and congestion in spite of the smaller population. This congestion is magnified by residents of Brookline who park their cars overnight in the Commonwealth sub-area. Night parking is illegal in Brookline.

The low percentage (37%) of the owner occupied structures has had a detrimental effect on the appearance of neighborhoods and the sense of community. The life style of some of the young people and that of the elderly who remain is con-

siderably different from that of the families who used to occupy the brick apartment buildings abutting Commonwealth Avenue. There are more people in this area with incomes under \$5000 (21%) than in other sections of Allston-Brighton. Their lower income and different buying patterns have had a strong influence on the kind of retail establishments locating in the area. Along Harvard Avenue, for example, a supermarket, variety stores and neighborhood pubs have been replaced by dating bars and shops catering to young people.

### 3. BRIGHTON

Although Brighton, too, has experienced an influx of students and young people since 1960, it has retained its family residential character. Brighton has 92% of the single family structures and 73% of the owner occupied structures in the district. The houses in Brighton are generally of wood frame construction and in reasonably good repair with the rate of owner occupancy (56%) slightly higher than the City as a whole. Within the Brighton subarea, there are four neighborhoods, Aberdeen, Brighton Center, Faneuil and Oak Square. Brighton Center saw the earliest settlement and it contains many large, impressive homes some of which are being converted to non-residential uses. The Aberdeen neighborhood contains many single family detached homes as well as some of the first suburban-type brick townhouses. The latter was constructed around 1890 as a result of the extension of Commonwealth Avenue to the Chestnut Hill Reservoir. The Faneuil neighborhood contains mostly one and two family detached dwellings. However, this neighborhood and the Oak Square neighborhood has experienced considerable pressure to increase the density by the creation of additional units within existing buildings in the last three years. The "suburban" quality of these neighborhoods will be jeopardized if these conversions go unchecked.

The population is more stable than that of the rest of the district or the City as a whole, 52% of the population resided in the same home in 1970 as in 1965. Unlike Allston or Commonwealth, Brighton saw a 43% increase in its elderly population from 1960 to 1970. There was also a substantial increase in the number of Chinese and Spanish-speaking people residing in Brighton. Public officials must now consider the special needs of these groups especially in the area of social services and public transportation for the elderly and English language assistance for the Chinese and Spanish-speaking.

Comparative Statistics - Allston-Brighton  
1970 U.S. Census Data

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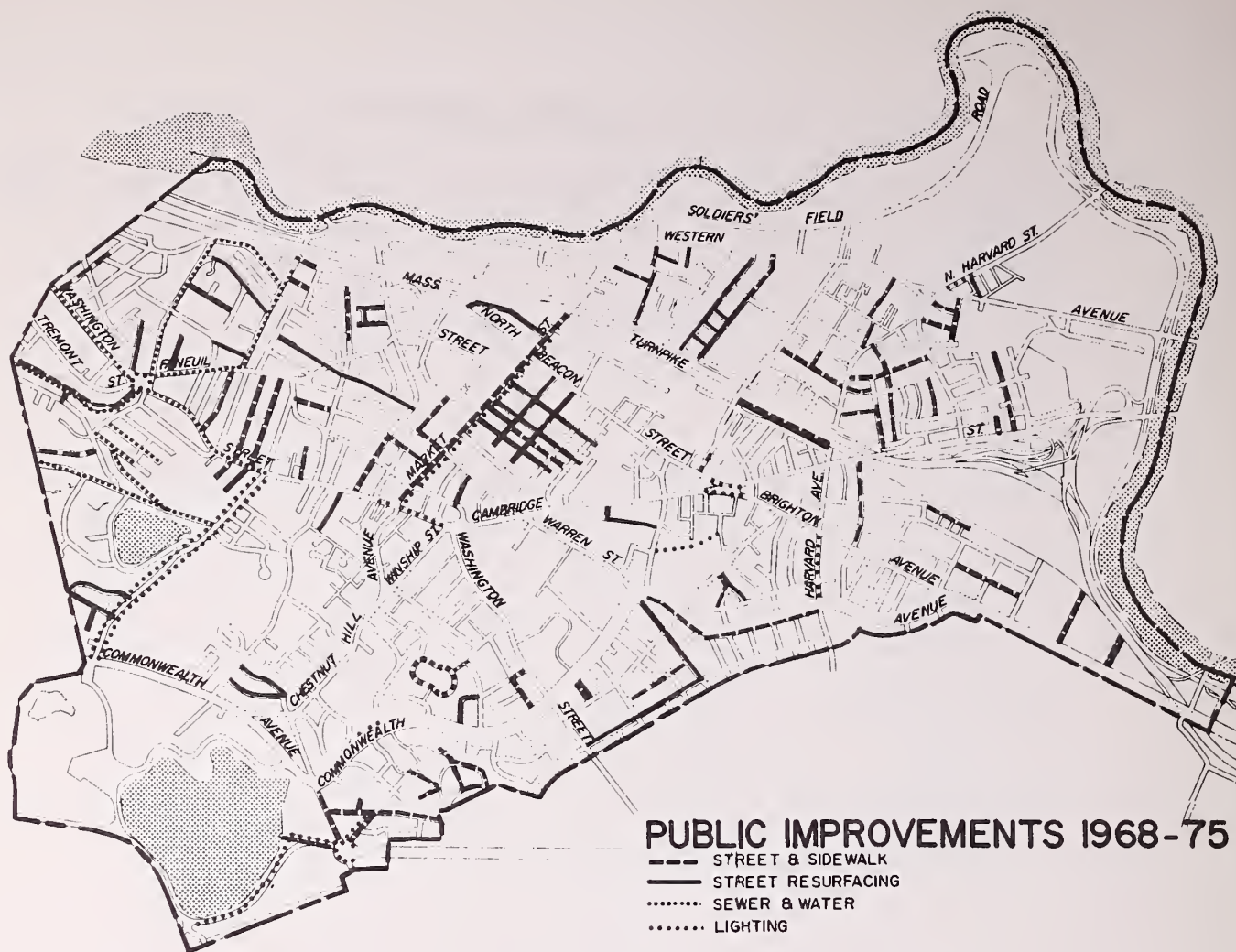
Population	Allston	Commonwealth	Brighton	District	(1975) Update)*	City	(1975) Update)*
Total 1970	12,403	17,566	33,685	63,657	67,405	639,803	637,986
Change from '60	2%	-7%	1%	-1%		-7%	
Aged 15-19 yrs. - 1970	2,016	659	2,632	5,307	5,801	60,900	64,706
Change from '60	163%	-10%	22%	45%		2%	
Aged 20-24 yrs. - 1970	2,454	5,799	4,881	13,134	17,330	76,958	87,267
Change from '60	84%	214%	90%	129%		47%	
Aged 65 yrs. & over 1970	1,043	3,305	5,330	9,678	9,808	81,437	81,318
Change from '60	-17%	-13%	43%	11%		-4%	
<b>INCOME</b>							
Median Family	9,345	8,930	9,990	9,626		9,133	
% Families under \$5,000	18%	21%	16%	17%		22%	
<b>HOUSING</b>							
Total Dwelling Units	3,795	9,544	11,935	25,324		232,856	
Units Needing Fix-up in excess of \$1000	1,319 (35%)	349 (4%)	1,370 (12%)	3,038 12%		67,102 29%	
Owner Occupied Structures containing 1-9 units	44%	33%	56%	51%		53%	
Market Condition	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong		Stable	
Mobility of Residents- Residence over 5 years 1970	37%	27%	52%	48%		50%	

\* Source: BRA Research Department

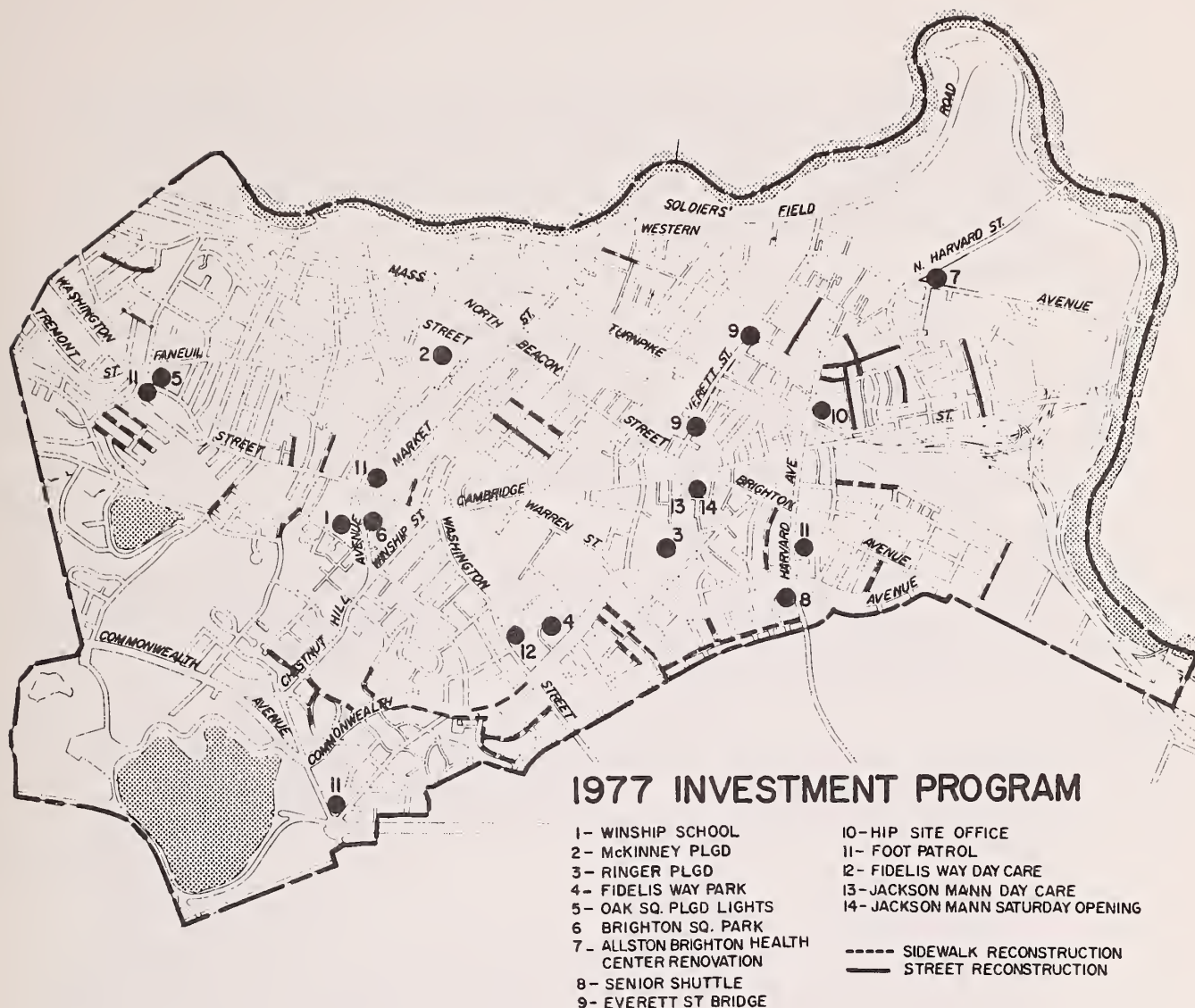
### C. PAST MAJOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT (1968-1977)

The major thrust of capital expenditures in the past eight years has been to strengthen neighborhoods through the construction or renovation of community facilities, parks and streets. The Union Square Fire Station and the resurfacing of Western Avenue and the Washington-Brighton corridor has added to the safety of the community. The new ballfields at Ringer Playground, Cassidy Playground, and Smith Field have been used continuously. The Jackson-Mann Community School and Brighton Branch of the Boston Public Library provide attractive and functional community facilities. At the same time there were over 7 miles of street construction, 3 miles of sidewalk reconstruction and over 8 miles of sewer and water work completed. Completed is the \$2,331,000 federally and state funded TOPICS (Traffic Operations Program to Increase Capacity and Safety) program to ease traffic flow in certain previously congested intersections including Union Square, Morgan Square, Oak Square and Cleveland Circle. There were 102 street trees planted in 1975 by the City.





Public effort in housing has been directed in three areas of activity: redevelopment, leased housing and rehabilitation. An urban renewal project in North Harvard provided cleared land for the construction of the Charlesview apartments for low and moderate income families and elderly. The Waverly apartments were built on land formerly occupied by a factory and a small construction company thereby demonstrating that industrial land can be reclaimed for residential use. The new Corey/Washington Elderly Housing Project is a BHA Turnkey project which includes special design attention to the needs of the elderly and handicapped. Under the leased housing program the Boston Housing Authority has been able to provide low and moderate income families and individuals with attractive housing. These tend to be concentrated in the Commonwealth Avenue area where there is a substantial number of elderly in need of such assistance and where the owners of buildings know about the existence and requirements of leased housing programs. Since September 1973 the Housing Improvement Program has encouraged the private rehabilitation of over 941 homes as of February 15, 1977 in the district. This program has been instrumental in the preservation of the housing stock by offering financial assistance to homeowners who make the home improvements necessary to comply with the housing codes.



#### D. 1977 PUBLIC INVESTMENT PROGRAM

The 1977 Public Investment Program for Allston-Brighton is directed to the stabilization of the residential areas with investment in six areas; housing, commercial centers, parks, elderly services, public facilities and public works. Most of the funds for this public investment will come from the City's federally funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.

##### HOUSING

There has been \$275,000 set aside for rebates for those homeowners making building code-related improvements to their property (call the local Housing Improvement Program office for details). These funds will provide for the rehabilitation of approximately 350 buildings. The



projected total rehabilitated structures under the HIP program for two years number 941. Twenty-one percent of the 1-6 family, owner-occupied stock will have been improved through the first and second year HIP allotment. This year homeowners over the age of 65 will be eligible for a 50% cash rebate.

#### COMMERCIAL CENTERS

The footpatrol program has helped to discourage vandalism and theft and has made merchants and shoppers feel more confident about being in the commercial center. The 1977 footpatrol program has been expanded to include Brighton Center, Harvard Avenue, Oak Square, Cleveland Circle, and Fidelis Way. The funding for the Footpatrol Program includes a \$45,000 CD grant.

#### PARKS

Historical documents refer to the corner of Chestnut Hill Avenue and Academy Hill Road as Brighton Square. A \$35,000 CDBG allotment will be used to rehabilitate Brighton Square as a sitting area for the many senior citizens in the area.

New lighting will be installed at the Oak Square Playground. The \$35,000 CD allotment will allow for the expansion of one of the district's most active Little Leagues. A district wide tree planting program will receive \$25,000 in CD funds for the planting of approximately 100 trees.

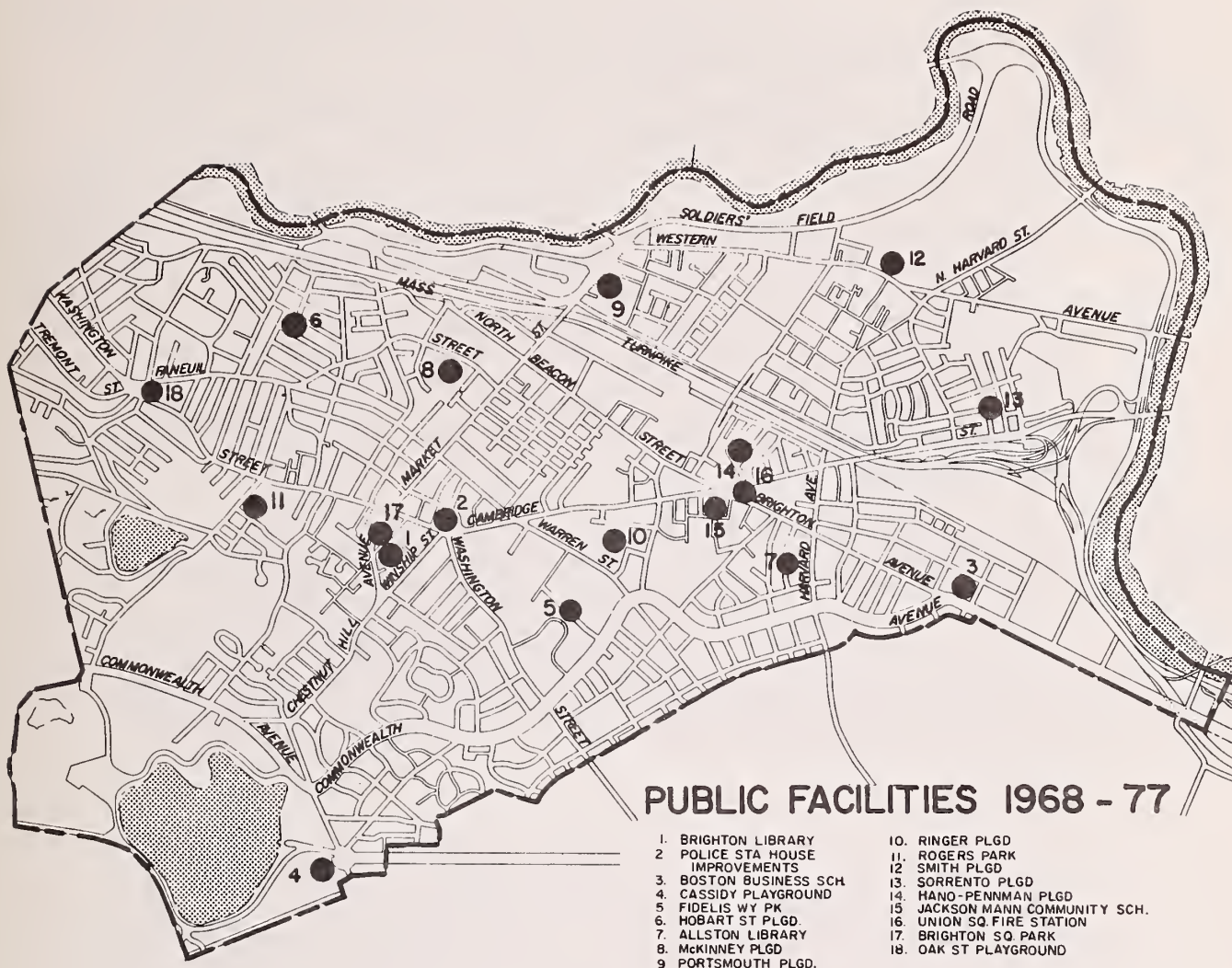
#### HUMAN SERVICES

The Senior Shuttle Program which provides transportation for medical, social and recreational purposes for elderly residents will be expanded to include two vehicles with a 1977 allotment of \$33,000 from CD funds. Increased efficiency should result in this year's program with the installation of two-way radios in each van.

The Fidelis Way Day Care and the Jackson/Mann After School Day Care centers have both received CDBG funding in the amounts of \$15,000 and \$10,000, respectively.

#### PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Allston-Brighton Neighborhood Health Center will receive a \$90,000 CD allotment for the expansion and conversion of existing space to allow for the addition of geriatric, podiatry and eye clinics.



## PUBLIC WORKS

The Allston-Brighton community will receive \$150,000 in CD funds for sidewalk patch paving. This work will take place in locations throughout the district based upon physical needs and pedestrian safety.

Traffic signals at the Everett Street Bridge will be installed through a \$35,000 CDBG allotment. This improvement will respond to the local community's concern over the potentially hazardous conditions which exist at both ends of the bridge.

## 2. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES/RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES (Mid- and Long-Range)

### A. HOMEOWNER UNCERTAINTY

#### Issue

Allston-Brighton has traditionally been a family, residential district with strong neighborhood ties. The influx of students and young working people into the community during the 1960's and early 1970's has strained those ties. Many older residents found themselves displaced because the student demand for housing raised rentals to levels which only groups of unrelated individuals could afford. Furthermore, the additional cars brought onto the local streets by newcomers resulted in traffic congestion, chronic parking problems and noise.

The housing stock in Allston-Brighton consists mostly of wood-frame structures built over 30 years ago. The homeowners who have maintained these properties will question the wisdom of any further investment if the quality of life in the neighborhoods substantially declines. Frustration over this issue could result in the sale of more homes to absentee landlords. This would be extremely detrimental to the health of Allston-Brighton as a residential community and to the City.

#### Strategy

The City must help to reinforce the residential quality of Allston-Brighton through effective programs and by reinforcing resident participation in shaping the district's growth. Community representation at public hearings for zoning variances and license applications should be encouraged. In the past, civic associations and merchant organizations have worked effectively with the Little City Hall and BRA in achieving positive results with the Zoning Board of Appeal and the Licensing Board.

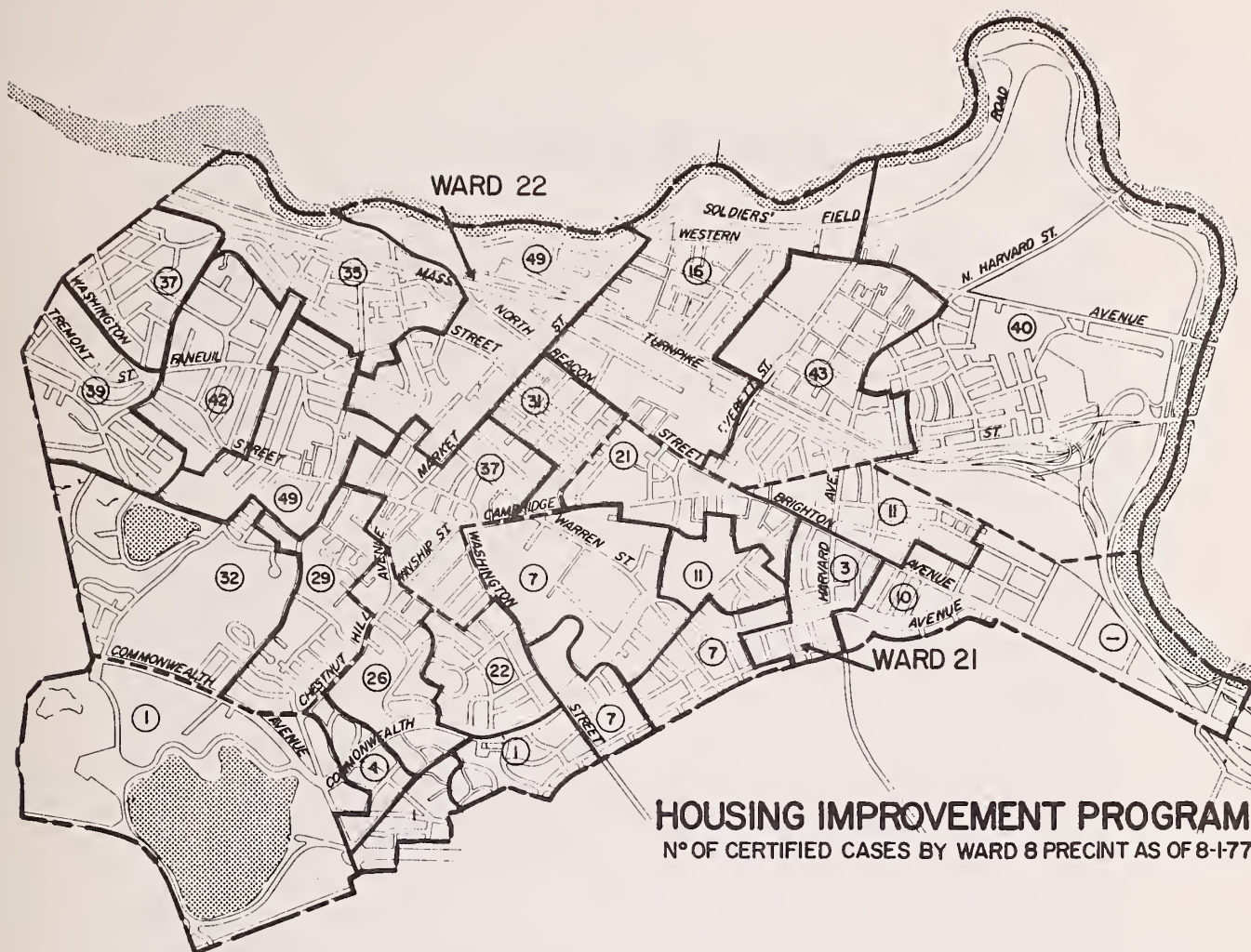
The impact of college students and personnel on the Allston-Brighton community is a complicated issue. In recent years, the City has requested Master Plans of growth from all of the colleges and universities within its borders. The community relations department of each of these institutions should develop a liaison with community representatives. This relationship can focus on the impact of student enrollment and physical growth of the institution and community needs.

Composition of Allston Brighton 1-4 Unit Housing Stock in 1970

	Total Units	# of Units in 1-4	% 1-4 of Total	#1 Unit Struct.	# Owner Occupied	#2 Unit Struct.	# Owner Occupied	#3-4 Unit Struct.	# Owner Occupied
<u>Allston</u>	3,795	2,439	64%	388	307	490	420	355	166
				79%		86%		50%	
<u>Commonwealth</u>	9,608	932	10%	134	85	155	154	153	103
				63%		94%		67%	
<u>Brighton</u>	11,941	7,073	59%	5,777	1,290	1,789	1,672	635	344
				22%		94%		54%	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>25,344</b>	<b>10,444</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>6,299</b>	<b>1,682</b>	<b>2,434</b>	<b>2,246</b>	<b>1,123</b>	<b>613</b>
				27%		92%		55%	

Source: BRA Research Department 4/76





The Housing Improvement Program has been expanded both in funding and scope for 1977. This program achieves several results. First, it helps homeowners to improve their properties and upgrade the neighborhoods in which they live and second, it helps to preserve the existing housing stock for future use within the community. The 50% rebate for residents over 65 years of age should help homeowners on fixed or limited incomes. A mechanism is needed to encourage landlords to maintain their properties over the long term and to discourage short term speculation.

The City should continue to fund the Housing Improvement Program and seek funds to provide owners with counseling and possible subsidies to rehabilitate apartments while keeping rents within the current rent levels. The federally funded Section 8 program and the State funded 707 Housing Program could provide this form of assistance. These programs can work to stabilize neighborhoods by allowing long time residents to remain in rehabilitated buildings. Any City funds allotted to residential sidewalk replacement or tree planting should be coordinated with other public and private efforts such as HIP to maximize the improvements to a neighborhood.

## B. NEGLECT OF PARKS AND PUBLIC WAYS

### Issue

Although parks and playgrounds are generally considered to be neighborhood amenities, if the maintenance of these facilities is inadequate they become a burden for abutters. Glass strewn playgrounds are unsafe and unsightly, yet this is the condition of many of the community's facilities. The neighboring property owners and civic minded groups have tried to assist in helping to keep Allston-Brighton recreational space safe and clean, but in the past there has often been limited support from the City.

Public ways are littered with trash and broken glass mainly because street sweepers are often blocked by illegally parked cars. Homeowners who try to maintain their property are discouraged by the "rundown" appearance of public property in their community.

### Strategy

It is increasingly apparent that frequent police surveillance of parks and playgrounds is necessary to eliminate the abuses that are currently occurring. There are other measures, however, that can help preserve our parks and playgrounds. Community concern and surveillance is essential and can effectively protect neighborhood recreational resources. Groups such as the Community Beautification Council can help organize neighborhoods and respond to such needs as requesting and/or providing trash receptacles where garbage is a problem. Proposals for new or renovated parks should include a maintenance plan and budget.

In view of the shortage of funds for acquisition and maintenance of park facilities, every effort should be made to maximize the use of existing community facilities.

The City should study the feasibility of a Community Park Corporation which could consist of Little City Hall representatives, Park and Recreation Department representatives and abutters of individual parks and playgrounds. Each corporation could be allotted funds and be responsible for the maintenance of the neighborhood parks.

The appearance of public ways would be substantially improved if the street sweeping machines could travel the length of a street unimpeded by illegally parked cars. The Police Department should continue to tow those vehicles so that drivers take parking regulations seriously.



## C. COMMERCIAL CENTER DECLINE

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### Issue

The decline of neighborhood shopping areas in Allston-Brighton is not unusual in the era of "one-stop" shopping at large outlying chain stores. The convenience of ample free parking at chain stores and the variety of merchandise available in regional shopping centers make these facilities attractive to those with automobiles. However, efforts can and are being made to enhance neighborhood business areas.

The appearance of neighborhood shopping areas affects the values of the surrounding residential property and the confidence of abutting homeowners. Because of this and because a large segment of the population in Allston-Brighton is elderly, without automobile transportation and dependent on neighborhood shops, the City must concern itself with these neighborhood commercial centers. A central issue therefore is how to upgrade declining commercial centers in the face of competition from outlying shopping malls.

The number and concentration of liquor licenses in Allston-Brighton has a detrimental affect on commercial centers and the surrounding neighborhood.

### Strategy

Both public and private effort is necessary to maintain the vitality of neighborhood shopping areas. The Boards of Trade serving the Allston-Brighton community can help to upgrade the neighborhood business areas. The City's Restore program provides free architectural services and rebates for facade improvements to business structures. The many sign code violations on Harvard Avenue and Washington Street could be corrected through Restore. The City's Neighborhood Business Coordinator can be most helpful in advising merchants of City services, stimulating cooperation between merchants within neighborhood centers, and facilitating a positive working relationship between the merchants and the residential community.

Efforts should be made to examine the current mix of stores in the business districts, assess the competition and encourage the entry of new stores which might add to the viability of these centers.

The Boards of Trade can effectively help to control the distribution of liquor licenses by voicing their concerns at public hearings before the City's Licensing Board. The business community in Allston-Brighton should involve itself in all City budgetary discussions and especially in the Community Development Block Grant process in developing and supporting proposals that will upgrade the commercial and surrounding areas. The footpatrol program is one such program that benefits the business community and was funded partly through the CDBG program.

#### D. INDUSTRIAL ENCROACHMENT

##### Issue

Although Allston-Brighton contains about 10% of the land in the city which is used for industry, it is not efficiently used and the industrial area is deteriorating because of obsolescence brought about by changing technology and poor access. Industries have expanded in a haphazard pattern by means of individual variances. As a result surrounding residential areas are experiencing increased truck traffic, congestion and air pollution. An issue of increasing importance to Allston-Brighton is how to ensure the viability of industrial firms without adversely affecting the quality of life in adjacent residential neighborhoods.

##### Strategy

Greater density, road improvements to provide easier access, circulation studies and private modernization efforts through City and private cooperation would contribute to the viability of the industrial firms thereby encouraging the continuation of job opportunities in the district. These will protect the property values of the abutting residential neighborhoods not only from the undesirable effects of industrial production but also from those land uses which are restricted from residential areas but allowed in less restricted industrial zones.

Existing industrial land should be evaluated in terms of upgrading use. For example, the property owned by the MTA located between Western Avenue and Cambridge Street and adjacent to Soldiers Field Road is presently leased to Conrail and used as a railyard. This property has been designated "Allston Landing" by Harvard University and is the site of a conceptual plan for development combining office, residential, and commercial use. If and when the property becomes available, this 32 acre site could be upgraded to provide new housing and job opportunities for the

residents of Allston-Brighton. Other sites that form an interface between industrial and residential uses should be developed in such a way as to reinforce the residential communities while preserving job opportunities.

The reuse of industrial warehouse properties should be carefully watched by the community and local officials. These conversions should result in a process of upgrading the surrounding land use.

#### E. INADEQUATE PARKING

##### Issue

Apartment districts and most other residential neighborhoods in Allston-Brighton were not laid out with adequate provision for the volume of cars which residents own today. The parking problem has become acute in that illegally parked cars are blocking the path of fire engines, snow removal, and street sweeping equipment. Some of the illegally parked vehicles belong to outsiders visiting the community but others belong to residents for whom there is simply no space to park.

A central issue becomes how to accommodate the increasing number of vehicles belonging to Allston-Brighton residents.

##### Strategy

A rigorous tow program by the Police Department should discourage the flagrant disregard of parking regulations. The City has expanded its tow lot facilities and increased car towing has made a visible improvement. This effort should continue.

Public officials should review carefully any proposals for new private development in Allston-Brighton to ensure that the latter will not exacerbate the existing parking problems in the community.

Overcrowding in areas where illegal apartments exist in violation of the zoning codes should be reported to the Little City Hall. Tenant congestion invariably leads to overcrowded conditions on streets and in driveways. Vehicle over-congestion impedes emergency vehicle access and endangers the entire neighborhood.



### 3. SUMMARY OUTLINE OF SECTION II (Issues & Strategies)

#### A. HOMEOWNER UNCERTAINTY

1. Issues
  - a. Decrease in Owner Occupied Structures
  - b. Decline in Neighborhood Confidence
2. Strategies
  - a. Promote Owner Occupancy
  - b. Coordinate City Programs with Private Investment
  - c. Participate in Institutional Housing Policy Decisions
  - d. Discourage Short Term Speculation

#### B. NEGLECT OF PARKS AND PUBLIC WAYS

1. Issues
  - a. Maintenance
  - b. Vandalism
  - c. Illegal Parking
2. Strategies
  - a. Increasing Community Surveillance
  - b. Organize Maintenance Programs
  - c. Report Illegally Parked Cars

#### C. COMMERCIAL CENTER DECLINE

1. Issues
  - a. Vandalism
  - b. Crime
  - c. Parking
  - d. Physical Deterioration
  - e. Liquor Licenses
2. Strategies
  - a. Footpatrol
  - b. Neighborhood Business Program
  - c. Restore
  - d. Efficient Use of Existing Parking
  - e. Active Businessmen's Associations
  - f. Control of Location and Quantity of Liquor Licenses

#### D. INDUSTRIAL ENCROACHMENT

1. Issues
  - a. Spread of Industrial Uses
  - b. Truck Traffic
2. Strategies
  - a. Consolidation of Industrial Uses
  - b. Buffer Zones Between Non-Compatible Uses
  - c. Separation of Local and Truck Traffic
  - d. Upgrade Uses that Border Residential Areas

#### E. INADEQUATE PARKING

1. Issues
  - a. Overcrowded Residential Areas
  - b. Illegally Parked Cars
2. Strategies
  - a. Police Tow Program
  - b. Off-Street Residential Parking
  - c. Parking Controls - New Development
  - d. Enforcing Building Code Occupancy Standards

## 4. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

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### A. INTRODUCTION

There are many ways in which the Allston-Brighton community shapes and directs growth within its neighborhoods and commercial centers. Planting shrubs along property lines, utilizing the Housing Improvement Program, and voicing concerns at zoning hearings all affect the type and quality of life in Allston-Brighton. There are, however, several opportunities for community action at a larger scale which can effectively have a long term impact on the growth of the community.

### B. ZONING CHANGES

Zoning is a legal tool used to shape land use patterns and regulate the scale of development within given boundaries. The zoning districts in Allston-Brighton have served the community in establishing residential and commercial uses that are reasonably consistent in scale and density. In the last ten years, changes in residential, commercial and industrial demands have led to a breakdown, in some instances, of zoning functions. Weekly zoning variance applications and the encroachment of non-compatible uses upon one another indicate a need to re-evaluate the existing zoning in Allston-Brighton and make appropriate changes in the designation of zoning areas.

The procedures for changes and modification of the Boston Zoning Code are well established. The following is an outline of the procedures:

#### 1. Change of Zoning (Procedure A)

- a. Proposed zoning change is presented to the BRA Board for approval.
- b. BRA Board recommends change to the Zoning Commission.
- c. Zoning Commission holds public hearing following advertisement and notification of appropriate parties.
- d. Zoning Commission can pass measure with seven affirmative votes.
- d. Ordinance goes to the Mayor.
- e. Mayor can:
  - (1) approve ordinance
  - (2) veto ordinance\*

\* Veto can be overridden with nine affirmative votes of the Zoning Commission.

- (3) take no action (this results in automatic passage after 15 days)
- (4) return measure to Zoning Commission with recommendations.

2. Change of Zoning (Procedure B)

- a. Citizen group request hearing before the Zoning Commission.
- b. Zoning Commission asks BRA for recommendation.
- c, d, e, f are the same as item b.

The BRA will conduct an evaluation of present zoning in target areas throughout Allston-Brighton. Information will be presented at a community meeting along with recommendations for changes. The BRA Neighborhood Planner will hold a series of working meetings with community representatives and the Little City Hall to consolidate a number of zoning change recommendations which are both warranted in a technical evaluation and supported by the Allston-Brighton community. The procedure for a change in zoning can then be initiated.

C. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROPOSALS

The CDBG program involves the distribution of federal funds that come to the City with an emphasis on certain improvement activities and citizen participation. The use of CDBG funds are varied and are fully explained at community meetings prior to the process in early Fall. The following list contains some of the CDBG projects that were funded last year through the program.

- 1. The Allston-Brighton Neighborhood Health Center - expansion and conversion of space.
- 2. Footpatrol - for commercial areas.
- 3. Brighton Square Park - to develop a sitting area.
- 4. Oak Square Playground - floodlights for Little League Field.
- 5. Tree Planting - district wide.
- 6. Traffic Signals - for Everett Square Bridge.
- 7. Senior Shuttle.
- 8. Fidelis Way Day Care.
- 9. Jackson/Mann After School Day Care.
- 10. Jackson/Mann Saturday Program.

11. Housing Improvement Program.

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12. Sidewalk Patch Paving.

Any individual or group that has an interest whether private or business in the community of Allston-Brighton is eligible to submit CDBG proposals for funding. The scale of proposals can range from a single tree to be planted in front of a private residence to a comprehensive program serving a large group of Allston-Brighton residents.

The CDBG process presents to the community an opportunity to formulate proposals that address the issues and strategies presented in Section II.

Funding proposals that do not receive CDBG funds still provide valuable information to local officials in terms of community priorities that can be addressed through the other funding sources such as City loans and other federal programs.

The BRA Neighborhood Planner and Little City Hall Manager are available to meet with individuals and/or community groups to discuss the formulation of proposals that address these issues.

D. SUMMARY

The planning process is ongoing. Day to day decisions make up one part of the process. By establishing medium and long range goals for the community's growth, these day to day decisions and comprehensive planning programs can reflect the values and desires of the Allston-Brighton district.

Community participation in both the procedures for change and program development are vital in maximizing the benefits of a comprehensive planning process in Allston-Brighton.



BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Robert L. Farrell, Chairman  
Joseph J. Walsh, Vice Chairman  
James G. Colbert, Treasurer  
James K. Flaherty, Assistant Treasurer  
James E. Cofield, Jr., Member  
Kane Simonian, Secretary  
Robert F. Walsh, Director

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Roy Bishop, Director, Neighborhood Planning Program  
David Trietsch, Allston/Brighton Neighborhood Planner

# 5. ALLSTON/BRIGHTON-Proposed Three Year Improvement Program (1978-1980)

ISSUE	STRATEGY	1977 INVESTMENT PROGRAM	PROPOSED 1978-1980 NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM ACTIVITIES
I. Homeowner Uncertainty	A. Owner Occupied Housing 1. Housing Improvement Program	\$275,000 CD	Continue to refine HIP with emphasis in targeted neighborhoods. Evaluate HIP 50% rebate for elderly.
	2. Coordination of Section B subsidies and State 707 funds.		Coordinate private & public funds to achieve maximum beneficial effect. Evaluate institutional expansion as it affects residential neighborhoods.
	3. Expanded enforcement of existing building & zoning regulations.		Adjust zoning districts to reinforce neighborhoods.
	B. Investor-Owned Housing 1. Expanded enforcement of existing building & zoning regulations.		Develop more effective means to enforce codes and process violations through ongoing discussions with LCH, HID, BRA. Study feasibility of a team inspection program that certifies building improvements before new tenants can move into units.
	2. Study of investor owned multi-family housing.		Assist City in formulating a policy for coordination of tax assessment, collection, inspection & rent control.
II. Neglect of Parks & Public Ways	C. Public Housing 1. Faneuil Street Development	Day Care - \$15,000 CD	Expand BHA maintenance efforts & continue modernization efforts to improve public housing
	2. Fidelis Way Development		Study methods of reducing vandalism & destruction of public property.
	D. Zoning Committee		Encourage formulation of Community Land Use and Zoning Review Committee.
	A. Improved maintenance of parks 1. Work with LCH to organize community groups to oversee maintenance of parks.	Parks Department Study	Develop pilot program to coordinate efforts of individual residents & civic groups in improving park maintenance.
	2. Participate in City wide study on vandalism in Boston's parks.	Funded through the National Science Foundation.	Implement findings.
III. Commercial Center Decline	B. Renovation of existing parks and playgrounds	Oak Sq. Playground Lights - \$35,000 (CD)	Work with LCH & Community Park Corporation to establish priorities in park and playground renovation scheduling.
	C. New Amenities 1. Brighton Square Park	\$35,000 (CD)	Develop sitting area for elderly.
	2. Systematic street tree planting		Complete the master plan for tree planting with emphasis on major arteries and commercial centers. Prepare phasing plan.
	3. Etna Street playground		Acquire & develop site with emphasis on elderly sitting area and tot lot & other activities based on community input.
	D. Street repairs		
IV. Inadequate Parking	E. Public Safety Improvements 1. Better identification of pedestrian crosswalks.		Work with LCH and community to identify street & sidewalk repair needs & coordinate community priorities with those of Public Works Department.
	2. Better traffic control signs.		Stripe pedestrian crosswalks in major intersections.
	3. Traffic signals for Everett St. Bridge.	\$35,000 (CD)	Study congested intersections to determine more appropriate signing. (Including Harvard Ave & Washington Street).
	A. Physical Improvements 1. Street furniture	Planters, trash receptacles and benches for Brighton Center.	Develop matching fund program with merchants for additional street furniture in all commercial centers.
	2. Facade Improvements		Encourage merchants to cooperate in RESTORE Program. Enforce the Boston Sign Code.
IV. Inadequate Parking	B. Program Improvements 1. Improved public safety	Footpatrol program for Harvard and Brighton Center - \$45,000 (CD)	Evaluate Footpatrol program. Study merchant sponsored security programs.
	2. Promotional and marketing advice.		Support merchant associations in encouraging appropriate businesses to move into Allston Brighton. Work with Neighborhood Business District Program (NBDP).
	A. Physical Improvements 1. Expanded Tow Program		Identify, lease or acquire site for pilot parking program in Commonwealth Avenue area. Prepare management system.
	2. Off-street residential parking.		
	3. Increased attention focused on parking needs of new apartments.		
IV. Inadequate Parking	B. Control Program		Work with LCH to increase enforcement of residential sticker program to encourage use of off-street residential parking lots. Work with local merchants and NBDP to improve efficiency of the use of existing parking lots and spaces in commercial areas.

